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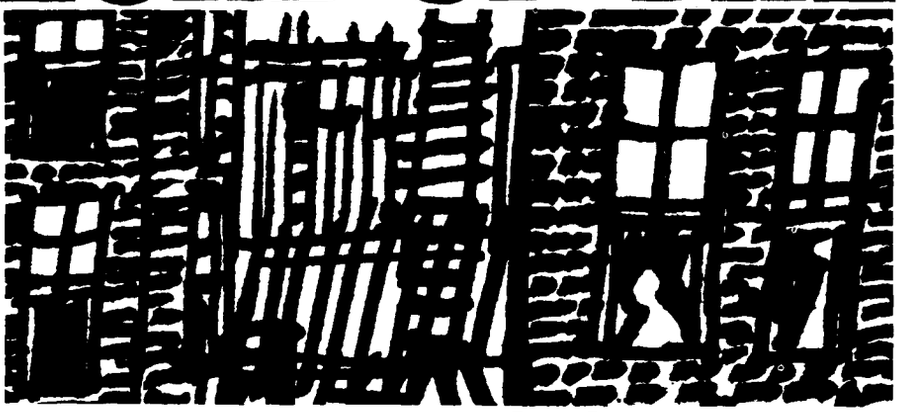
THE LORD OF THE GHETTOS

ROBERT COLES



BETTY PILKINGTON **UNHAPPY BIRTHDAY AT THE UN** DORIS GRUMBACH **AMERICAN PEACENIKS, 1815** EUGENE FONTINELL **BEYOND BELIEF** COLIN WESTERBECK, JR. **HELL'S ANGELS & HOLLYWOOD'S** TODD GITLIN **IN DEFENSE OF ANARCHISM** DANIEL M. MURTAUGH **MONK DAWSON & PAULINE ARCHANGE**

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NEWS & VIEWS

Caldera's Caldron

Yet another Latin American nation has peeled its eye for progressives (i.e., "trouble-makers") among the Catholic clergy—Venezuela.

A Belgian priest, Father Francisco Wytack, was heaved out of the country after participating in a hunger strike protesting unemployment and low wages.

A Puerto Rican priest, Father Salvador Freixedo (author of *My Church Sleeps*), was forced out after 48 hours, so as "to avoid demagogic problems."

Two bishops—Gerardo Valencia Cano of Colombia and Antulio Parrilla Bonilla of Puerto Rico—were turned back at Caracas airport. Bishop Valencia was scheduled to give several lectures in Venezuela on social issues.

Venezuela's objective, of course, is to protect the status quo by insulating against the stirrings for political and social justice, which are agitating the clergy of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile and other Latin countries.

Like its neighbors, Venezuela, obviously, would prefer that the clergy remain in the sanctuary—holy and irrelevant.

Until lately, that situation could be taken almost for granted. The Venezuelan clergy, particularly as typified by the hierarchy, was conservative, closed and withdrawn.

But the winds of change are excepting no one and nothing. At their recent episcopal assembly, Venezuela's bishops voted several "startling" innovations, notably one on seminary training.

Seminarians, henceforth, may work for private companies while studying for the priesthood. "This will give them more strength in their apostolic, scientific, human and social preparation," the bishops said. "They will have the opportunity to meditate on the temporal life objectively and to mature their personalities."

If one is searching out signs of a new dawning, it's detail such as that to look for. The Venezuelan government is catching the signs too, and obviously doesn't like what it sees. Thus the efforts to insulate.

What adds to the noteworthiness of the Venezuelan repression is that it occurs not under a dictatorship, such as is the case in Paraguay, Brazil, etc., but under the reputedly open Christian Democrat government of Rafael Caldera.

Embattled Brazil

Agnello Cardinal Rossi, the Brazilian newly named to head the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, commented after meeting with Pope Paul that the Pope fully appreciated "the sincere and Christian efforts" of the Brazilian government to improve relations with the church.

One wondered what Rossi, a conservative, could have been smoking. Everything pointed to intransigence and a hardening of attitudes by the government toward the church in Brazil.

For almost at the same time that Rossi was speaking softly, Jaime Cardinal de Barros Camara was exclaiming loudly about the imprisonment of four priests and the lay director of the Youth Catholic Workers. . . . Reports were circulating that Brazilian police had detained for four hours the secretary general of the National Brazilian Bishops' Conference, Bishop Aloisio Lorscheider, presumably as a warning to the bishops to refrain from criticizing the government. . . . The governor of San Paulo was accusing Dom Helder Câmara, Archbishop of Recife, of being subsidized by the Communist Party ("Dom Helder Câmara belongs to the propaganda machine of the Communist Party and is the instrument of its promotion in Europe"). . . . And in Rio itself, television and the press were continuing their attacks on the clergy, especially those who work among slumdwellers (*favelados*) and workers.

If the government was engaged in "sincere and Christian efforts" to improve church-state relations, it plain didn't show.

The State of the Word

Third-quarter advertising revenues of the nation's leading magazines showed no turn-around from the disastrous six-month period.

Life is now $12.8 million off its 1969 receipts. *Look* is down $7 million; *Time*, $5.6 million; *Newsweek*, $1.8 million; *The New Yorker*, $1.8 million.

For *Life* and *Look*, these are declines of 12 and 14 percent, respectively, quickening speculation about how long both will be around.

The big gainer among weeklies and biweeklies continues to be *New York Magazine*, which has shot ahead of 1969 by 131 percent. In dollars this translates to $2,293,-353, as against $991,297 in '69.

Monthlies (*Atlantic, Esquire*, etc.) are generally doing well, though *Holiday* is way down (19 percent). Business magazines, with the exception of *Harvard Business Review*, are all down. So, too, fashion magazines—which, come to think of it, may indicate that the present trend isn't all bad.

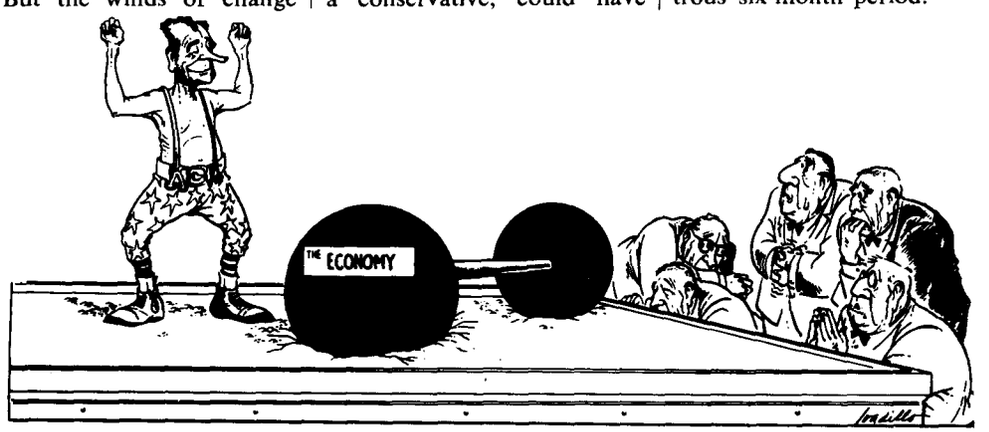
Odds and Ends

—The election of a Marxist as President of Chile brought a flowering of religious fervor in Santiago's wealthy Las Condes district. Ten parishes hurriedly arranged novenas in honor of Mary, and priests generally reported increases in church attendance and the sacraments.

—Everyone knows there are no atheists in foxholes. What wasn't realized is that the believers are apparently all of Christian persuasion. U.S. Navy press release 345-70 thus canonizes sailors extending a helping hand to disabled Vietnamese veterans: "Young men raised in Christian homes don't reject their moral values in a few short months of adversity."

—Louise de Vilmorin on being asked shortly before her death last winter whether she planned to marry her dear friend André Malraux: "How out of date you are! Don't you know that nowadays it's only priests who get married?"

JOHN DEEDY



Vadillo, Siempre, Mexico

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CORRESPONDENCE

Prisoners of War

Ridgewood, N. J.

To the Editors: There are those who, as they are entitled to do, raise the question "Why now?" to President Nixon's call for a cease-fire. The most ready answer that they are providing, as the November elections approach, is that the motivation primarily is one of domestic politics. If this, in fact, is the main underlying reason for the President's setting forth his five-point plan now, we might all do better simply to rejoice at this contribution of the 1970 elections in bringing about a major step toward world peace.

Another more important question though, and one not as easy to answer, is that of the good faith and sincerity of the President. The final point in his five-point plan is "that all prisoners of war, without exception, without condition, be released now. . . ." President Nixon could easily demonstrate that he does speak in honesty and sincerity by, "without exception, without condition," releasing those prisoners of war in jail in the United States—the Berrigans and all others who have chosen dramatic means of resistance to the war, and those who have refused to take up arms against others. For these, too, are prisoners of war in the fullest sense. A further demonstration would be for the President to declare amnesty for all who have fled the borders of the United States of America as their form of resistance. Not to do so would contradict the spirit in which he speaks.

THOMAS C. HUNTER

Dogma vs. History

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Concerning Gregory Baum's review of my book, *The Radical Kingdom,* I would like to make several comments.

1.) The second half of the review somewhat distorts the whole tone of the book by insisting that I 'insist' on various positions, such as utopianism.

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A POLITICS OF FEAR

It did not receive the attention it deserved, but John Lindsay's Council of Churches speech in New York indicting the Nixon Administration for seeding the clouds of "suspicion and mistrust" that hang over the nation was perhaps the most significant statement to issue during the 1970 election season. News focus, however was not on Lindsay's message, but rather on the fact that Lindsay had broken formally with Richard Nixon and the Republican national leadership. The media hurried from that detail to speculation whether Lindsay would change party affiliation and whether he was now both-feet in the '72 presidential race. It was a classic instance of not seeing the forest for the trees, the consequence being that the fullest, most statesmanlike analysis of an alarming, if not sinister, national political strategy was neglected for the heady surface implications of the Lindsay criticism. It was a regrettable slight by the media.

Essentially, Lindsay charged the Republican leadership, and the President specifically, with introducing into the political campaign a policy of fear and of playing on the scare-emotions of the electorate. "I believe that America and the Republican party traditionally stand for honorable goals, honorably sought," Lindsay declared. "But when the President and his lieutenants tell us to be afraid, when they pretend that respected candidates condone violence—as though Weathermen were running in this election—then they are deserting the essential principles of both country and party." Lindsay cited chapter and verse, but his case hardly needed clinching. It was his almost for the stating.

Yet, serious as was the campaign situation on which Lindsay dwelled, it could be prelude to something no less serious if this same policy of fear were to be shaped to the non-election period, a possibility not to be discounted. The ground has been amply furrowed: by the treatment accorded Goodell; by the further intimidation of the media (now an Agnew threat about "people in government" examining newscasters); by the relapse into blacklists (the House Internal Security Committee's list of campus "radical" speakers); by the dignifying of ultraright vigilante organizations; by a whole series of political perversions. All that is needed is the will to exploit further, and this may be present by impulsion.

For the fact is, the Administration hardly needs the circumstance of an election to exploit the fear-quotient of movements and situations it has helped create. The American Security Council, for instance—a group which spent the fall libeling Goodell and other senators as a "unilateral disarmament" lobby responsible for an alleged missile gap with Russia—

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will, for its purposes, be a handy group to have around when the ABM and military bills need a little muscle to help them over legislative hurdles. The Chotiners and Colsons will advise from the White House, and a hefty treasury will overwhelm the counter-warnings of respectable citizen and professional organizations.

The point is that the 1970 campaign has likely evolved much more than a strategy for election politics. It likely has evolved a policy for an Administration, if only for reason that Nixon and his team have committed themselves to a course from which there may be no turning back without loss of whatever face there is left. In other words, what we may have witnessed the past several weeks was the unmasking of a President, the final repudiation of his policy of domestic reconciliation, and the exaltation of a politics of fear. It isn't a pretty scene.

ANOTHER STEP

Competition between the two major parties is essential to the good working of our political system, it is generally agreed, and it is even more valuable when one party tries to outdo the other in the cause of reform. That is what has happened in the wake of the Congressional reform bill discussed in our editorial of Oct. 23. The measure that passed both House and Senate was a definite step forward; its chief failure was that of doing nothing about the rigid seniority system that is one of the major abuses in Congress.

Now House Republican leaders have stolen a march on their Democratic colleagues by proposing to their GOP associates immediate steps to eliminate the seniority system. Under the GOP proposal, nominations for committee chairman or ranking minority member of each committee would be made by the Republican Committee on Committees, itself composed of members from each state having at least one GOP member in the House. After the nominations had been made, each House Republican would cast a secret ballot for his choice as top-ranking GOP member of each committee, either chairman or highest-rank minority member, depending on which party controlled the House. The Republican plan is simplicity itself; if adopted by both parties it would mean an end to a system that chiefly benefits 70-year-old Democratic chairmen from one-party states. The GOP proposal, in short, deserves not only support by all Republicans but the sincerest form of flattery—imitation by the Democrats.

This week Philip Nobile, who became an assistant editor of Commonweal *in the Fall of 1968, leaves the editorial staff to pursue other work. He takes with him our thanks for his many contributions to the magazine.*

THE EDITORS

American Peaceniks, 150 Years Ago

Who in this country's past first spoke out for conscientious objection to all war and for refusal, under any terms, "to support the cause of war and bloodshed"? The Shakers, a little-known sect who were the offshoot of the Quakers, who arrived in upstate New York in 1774 from Manchester, England, and who flourished (6,000 members during the Civil War) in the 19th century. Now they are reduced to a remnant of old people, a dying group, even remembered incompletely. A recent article by Janet Malcolm [*New Yorker,* "On and Off the Avenue," Aug. 8, 1970] summed up the Shakers as "a celibate, communistic, separatistic, millenialistic sect," and then reviewed their great contributions to the "vernacular" crafts of America, their domestic and architectural innovations, without once mentioning what is, to my mind, their most notable contribution to the life of this nation, their early, impregnable pacifism and resolute conscientious objection.

Their history, beginning with the American Revolution, is one of opposition to all wars, even patriotic ones. Under the leadership of a tough-minded woman named Ann Lee (who was an early feminist to the point of abhorring marriage and feeling that "the lustful gratification of the flesh" was "the source and foundation of human corruption"), they refused to join the colonial cause despite their sympathy for it. For this they were imprisoned.

Eighty years later, while maintaining their theoretical abolitionism, the Shakers would not fight for the Union in support of their views, and so became the first group in this country to be granted the official status of conscientious objectors. By now Ann Lee was dead, and the group was led by a group of elders; it is an interesting, women's liberation side-note to Ann Lee's biography that she was regarded by her followers, both during and after her lifetime, as Christ in female form, and not inconceivable that Mother Ann Lee is the American foundress of women's liberation in its most extreme form at a time when women were never less liberated.

Almost unnoticed in the histories of pacifistic documents is the Shakers' pamphlet published in Albany, N.Y., in 1815 by the 24 Elders or Trustees of the Society which at that time called itself "the United Society of Believers," or, sometimes, with lovely simplicity, the "the Society of People." A spare, well-reasoned 20 pages of text, the pamphlet is entitled, with the customary nonstop 19th-century sentence,

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Declaration of the Society of People, Shewing their Reasons For Refusing to Aid or Abet the Cause of War and Bloodshed, By Bearing Arms, Paying Fines, Hiring Substitutes or Rendering Any Equivalent for Military Services. Unlike subsequent statements of anti-war sentiments throughout that century and this, this one is firmly based on the conviction that the Shakers' duty to God superseded all other duties, that Christ was primarily the Prince of Peace, and that to desert his peaceful Domain was to forsake *him.*

The pamphlet begins simply: "Our objections (to all wars) are founded on a sense of duty to God, to ourselves and to our fellow-creatures; and are supported first, by divine revelation; second, by the natural rights of man; third, by the Constitution and fundamental laws of our country."

Their duty to God above all other possible duties is the heart of the argument. "His Kingdom is not of this world," he has revealed himself in his son Jesus Christ, we have "enlisted under the banners of the King of Kings," and therefore "we cannot render service to any authority which stands in competition with his will. He has expressly declared that, the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. (Luke IX 56)"

Oddly enough, the Shakers form their imagery with the terminology of war—"enlisted under the banners," "we consider ourselves as his soldiers." Then, in these terms, they pose the question: "If it should be asked, what is our warfare, seeing we claim the character of soldiers? We answer, our warfare is the warfare of Christ, the great captain of our salvation. It is a warfare against the darkness of this world."

They are aware, they point out, that they will be criticized by others who will ask: if every American acted as you do "the enemy would overthrow the country." They respond: "We are firmly persuaded that those who subject themselves to the cross of Christ and, after his example, subdue those evil propensities which lead to war and strife, render more essential service to their country than they possibly could by bearing arms and aiding war."

They are equally untroubled by the thought of not bearing arms against invasion: "Were mankind divested of pride and ambition, all wars would cease. The professors of Christianity are looking for a time when, according to ancient prediction, there shall be universal peace."

How, they ask, and bravely reply: "We believe, beyond all controversy that God has called us to this very work; and that it is required of us to set the example of peace, and to maintain it at all hazards."

Theirs is, they saw, at this stage "very small and inconsiderable work" but they are not deterred by questions of size, remembering the origins of their faith. Their peace work might even be thought to be "contemptible in the eyes of mankind, yet it ought to be remembered that every important dispensation of the work of God always had a small beginning, and increased through the labours and example of its subjects."

Once this central principle is declared, the Shaker elders have no difficulty establishing their additional points about the natural rights of man and the Constitution and fundamental laws of our country as supporting their convictions about conscientious objection. They cite the Declaration of Independence: they claim exemption of their property from all war taxes since their property is sacred (i.e., consecrated). It is all dedicated to the Lord, just as each member of the Society is so dedicated. They state their claim for exemption from the political affairs of this world, since it is clearly impossible to be of two kingdoms, the temporal and the spiritual. They show that, with true American individualism and independence, the Society is responsible for all the services and attentions to its members the political institutions of the country offer. Maintaining their own poor, sick and elderly, being generous in their contributions to the suffering outside their Society, supporting such civic efforts as the building of roads, they feel they have done more than most for civic betterment.

They steadfastly would make one exception, the support of the government in its legal and police protection of society: "There is no need of the compulsion of human laws to govern those who are governed by the laws of Christ; for they violate no laws, nor even disobey any, that does not stand in competition with the laws of God."

There are other good and quotable places in the *Declaration,* and fine, ringing sentences like, "It ought to be remembered that conscience is the Throne of God in Man; and whoever usurps the authority of conscience, usurps the Throne of God."

The bravery of the Society in holding to its anti-war, anti-pleasure, pro-agriculture posture, was rewarded only by decline. The Shakers' mode of life did not help to swell their ranks for, opposed to marriage, they took in and raised orphans, a practice which had to stop when New York State made it increasingly difficult for single persons to adopt them. Now reduced to less than 40 persons, elderly Shakers wait out their deaths and the disappearance of their Society, some of them in the Albany County poorhouse named, not without some final irony, the Ann Lee Home.

DORIS GRUMBACH

(Doris Grumbach, author and essayist, teaches English at the College of St. Rose in Albany, N.Y.)

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CHANGING YOUR SPOTS

PETER STEINFELS

NO, THE campaign was not *all* a waste. It produced, for example, the following statement from one gubernatorial candidate:

"I worked for a long time to get to the head of the establishment. Now that establishment is under attack. I didn't get to the head of the establishment in order to lead its liquidation. . . ."

The speaker was Nelson Rockefeller. The story of his years of struggle from rags to riches is indeed an inspiring one: how he began as a chimney sweep, thriftily saving the dimes his grandfather gave him, till he reached the head of the establishment some three months later. But let me spare you that tale. What candidate, after all, did not begin as a chimney sweep?

As head of the establishment, Mr. Rockefeller was able to spend a mere $6 million on his election campaign. Not his personal fortune, of course. Unthinkable, and besides it's against the law. Nelson gave only $270,000. The bulk of the rest came from (a) his stepmother, Martha Rockefeller; (b) his brother, Winthrop Rockefeller; (c) his brother, David Rockefeller; (d) his brother Laurance Rockefeller; (e) his sister Abby Mauze.

Not that the Rockefeller candidacy was so different from many others. Multimillionaires throughout the country were doing the same. Those who are worried about the breakdown of the family should look again.

What links the multimillionaire and politics these days is something called the spot commercial. There is no point in rehearsing the dangers of these spots, the distortions, innuendos, and outright smears, on the one hand, the totally irrelevant image-building, on the other, to which they have given rise. Nor is the solution to the whole problem so difficult to conceive: a ban on political advertising in less than 5-minute segments.

I even have a suggestion for getting such a bold measure adopted. Produce a series of 30- and 60-second spots for such Causes as the Weathermen, the Panthers, and the Yippies.

Eldridge Cleaver might dandle his baby on his knees. With the baby babbling pleasantly, the camera focus shifts to the face of Cleaver's beautiful wife in the background, zooms slowly so that her face and then her eyes fill the whole screen while the voice-over says, "An America which has no room for them, has no room for any of us."

A quick 4-second shot of Johnson speaking heatedly—but without sound—is followed by the roar of planes, quick shot of bombing raids, horrible shot of Vietnamese victims. The sequence is repeated, sometimes with Nixon speaking soundlessly, sometimes with Rusk, sometimes with Agnew. Each time the shot of the destruction and injuries grows more horrifying. The final shot looks down at a group around a table quietly constructing a bomb. Screen blank. Voice: "Who are the real bombers?"

Lynch mobs, Bull Connor, police beating students, National Guardsmen firing. Freeze on famous shot of girl kneeling by Kent State victim . . . followed by straight-on shots of the well-known revolutionary personalities, suggesting mug shots yet clearly showing people who are defiant and serious. "They fought back. Wouldn't you?"

Camera on Mrs. Rudd. She is paging through a family photo album, and as she talks the camera cuts from her worried face to homey pictures of Mark, as a toddler, a Boy Scout, vacationing, etc. "My son, too," says Mrs. Rudd, "is missing in action. It's an action which is sometimes hard to understand. Just like all the great actions in history. . . ."

The foreman of a wrecking crew is interviewed before the site where he is working. He is wearing a hard hat. While he speaks, the noise of wrecking, including several explosions is heard in the background. "Could you give us your opinion of the student revolutionararies, sir?" asks the reporter. "Yeah, well I know that the media likes to give the impression that guys like me hate these radical kids," replies the hard-hat. "But for one thing, you gotta admit those kids have guts. And then there's some things we know just from our jobs. Like we've gotta tear down this building here without knowing exactly what's going to go in its place. You've gotta tear down before you can build up." Camera swings around to straight-on close-up. "That's only common sense."

There are other possibilities, of course. Folk-Rock in background. Abbie Hoffman clowning with a bunch of friends. Bernadette Dohrn running along a beach with her long hair in the wind. "Freedom," says the narrator, "freedom! That's what our nation was meant to give you. That's what *they* want . . ." (big Fellini-esque scene of happy people from all walks of life.) ". . . for everyone!"

A few of those spots on the Big Eye, and the spot commercial problem would disappear almost overnight.

Or else Abbie Hoffman might be elected Governor of New York.

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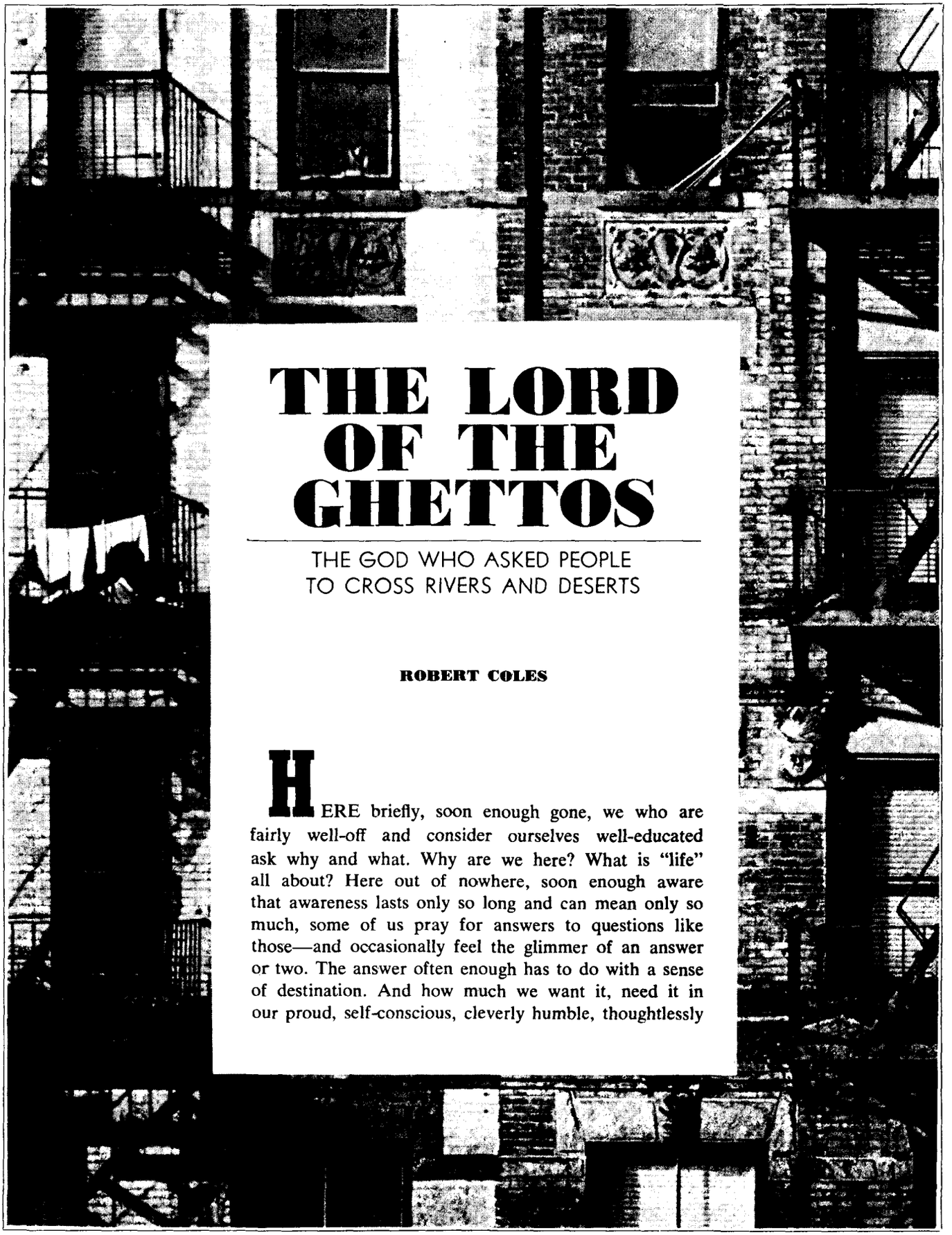

THE LORD OF THE GHETTOS

THE GOD WHO ASKED PEOPLE TO CROSS RIVERS AND DESERTS

ROBERT COLES

HERE briefly, soon enough gone, we who are fairly well-off and consider ourselves well-educated ask why and what. Why are we here? What is "life" all about? Here out of nowhere, soon enough aware that awareness lasts only so long and can mean only so much, some of us pray for answers to questions like those—and occasionally feel the glimmer of an answer or two. The answer often enough has to do with a sense of destination. And how much we want it, need it in our proud, self-conscious, cleverly humble, thoughtlessly

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arrogant and presumptuous minds: the conviction we are on a journey that matters, the sense that we have something ahead of us, a place of sorts awaiting.

Like us, men and women who are poor and desperate and at best barely literate also hunger for a permanent home, a somewhere in which an arrival is never to be followed by a departure, "a guaranteed set-up" is the way I heard it put by one of West Virginia's mountaineers now become a citizen of "Chicago, Chicago, a wonderful town." He had heard that song in a juke box and he felt as entitled as any observer and writer to take note of the ironies about him in that "wonderful town." To do so, however, he did not choose the language of social science (or for that matter politics). Instead he called upon another, more familiar and congenial "frame of reference," and in so doing he could give his head and his heart and his voice and his arms and his hands all the reign and sway he wanted and needed: "Before I came here to the city, I prayed; let me tell you, I did. I prayed and I prayed until I was so tired I thought God would just enter my head, all prayed-out like it was, and say something like, 'Listen, Mister Allen, the way to go is that way, and when you get there, it'll be alright, so don't you worry yourself one bit more.' But I know my religion. I know God hasn't gone and wasted His time by putting us here, just so He can always be whispering little hints into our ears, and telling us all the answers before the game is over. You have to close your eyes sometimes. You have to trust in what's ahead. He did, on the Cross He did. His eyes were lowered, you know. I told my wife all the way up to Chicago that I'd rather not look too hard, I'd just rather not. I'd rather keep my eye on the road, so we'll be spared death; to look, to see what it's like as we got near to the city—well, that wasn't for me. I might have turned around. I might have lost my nerve and got to thinking like the Devil wants you to—and according to the Devil there's no Heaven, there's no rest in store for us, there's no guaranteed set-up, even if God tries to build one for you. I might have stopped the car and sat there and shake and shake, while she was crying the way she always does, Clara—soft it is, and she lets the tears go all the way down, and they fall off her face or some of them find a way of getting onto her neck, and she doesn't seem to mind.

"We had none of that on the road. I said to Clara and all my kids that they should say goodbye to those mountains—goodbye, period, the end. We hope to go back, of course. But you can't come to the city unless you've *decided* to come. You see what I mean? I'll tell you how it is: you don't want to leave because of the strangeness ahead of you, but you know you leave or you near die, just about, and you know that your kids might find something in the cities, though God knows what, so you wrench yourself away, you tear yourself and force yourself and pull upon yourself, and finally you're loose, and floating—driving the car it is—and soon you're there. And here we are and here we've been for a couple of years, but don't ask me if I was right or wrong. Do we ever know, any of us, what's right and what's wrong? I say no—but I could be wrong, you know."

And he went on; and he went on; and he told me that it is true that his mind catches itself wandering back, but most of the time no, most of the time he is in spirit where he is in fact—which means in a white ghetto of sorts just north of Chicago, where he has decided to "seek salvation," or less grandly, to "make a struggle," or more personally, "to throw everything, every ounce of energy, toward staying alive." Not that he actually can do so, summon all his abilities in the way he once hoped he might be able. Often he complains that he feels useless, hopeless, idle, ill-used, at a loss about things, worried in general as well as over the specific and obvious difficulties in his and his family's way. Often he wonders whether another city might not be the answer—since, again, he believes he has thoroughly convinced himself that there is no real turning back to West Virginia. But does one do that, go from city to city? Or are not all cities alike, places of what he calls "strangeness," places at best of the thinnest hope, places where one barely gets a hold on things and feels no more than safely arrived—rather than utterly and explicitly condemned, as was the case "back home, up the hollow."

Now how can that be? How can he feel so, a man who loves Down Bottom Creek, West Virginia, and hates Chicago, Illinois, a man who pines for those hills, yearns for his old cabin, mourns dozens of things left behind and could leave the city tomorrow and miss nothing, so he at least insists? No one can answer such questions. In his own way, with his own words and his own "perspective" (if such he has to have) that mountaineer has asked them of himself, those questions and all the others that anyone in the whole wide world might be inclined to: "I've asked myself everything there is to ask. There can't be a single question I haven't

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"I know my religion. I know God hasn't gone and wasted His time by putting us here, just so He can always be whispering little hints into our ears . . ."

put to myself. Lately I've been sick, and when you get sick, it makes you stop and think, and you ask yourself even more questions. Sickness can break a man's pride; that's what our minister used to tell us back in the hills. Here we have a minister, too, and thank God for him, because if you have questions nagging at you, it's a minister who can help you with the answers.

"There's one answer I do believe I've found for myself: it's better for my children up here. In a city you can get some money; it may not be a lot of money, but back there we got *no* money. Here I work. I don't make much, but I make something. I make enough to feed my family, and my kids get some food in school, and there's no courthouse gang out to starve us to death like there was back there. I love the mountains, but look what goes with the mountains—the crooks in the courthouses, and the robbing they do of you and the cheating, if you so much as lift an eyebrow on anything they say or they do. In the city you're able to wake up in the morning and you know you'll make it through the day and so will your wife and kids. Here in Chicago I'm not saying to myself that I don't know if we'll ever eat again. Here I live in a building that has running water and electricity and heat. The snow and ice outside don't mean sitting day and night in front of a fire, and knowing that it's only a log or two that keeps us all from dying."

SO, IT WAS exceedingly grim in the past and now it is still grim, but not quite so grim; never forget it, small differences make a great deal of difference. Over and over again one hears that said: it's no great pleasure in the big city, but it's a little better there in certain respects, and accordingly life itself can take on a somewhat changed meaning. Not that memories fade and all the good things about the past are forgotten, nor do the noisy streets and crowded tenements of America's "second city" grow and grow on newly-arrived white yeomen from the hills of Appalachia, so that a return to the hollows gradually becomes inconceivable for them.

Maybe the man's wife can say what they both have in mind. Maybe she can find the words, the Clara he mentions all the time as the one with the "good sense and courage" to make him leave—ask and urge and beg and plead and insist and demand that they all leave: "I never know what to say. I'm no good at saying anything. But I know one thing: it's good to be here in the city, as bad as it is here. And I believe God was the one who told us, finally, that we had to go. He came to us, God did, and He told us that He'd done it before, asked people to move across rivers and deserts. It used to be I could hear God in church, don't ask me how. Sometimes I'd hear Him in the woods; I'd hear His voice in the wind, or I'd hear his voice go washing down the side of the hill, bubbling and gurgling along, right inside the creek. I told the minister that, and he smiled, and he said that of course it will happen, because that's what God did it for, provide us with all of Nature's things, so we could have them, and sometimes we could listen to Him through them. Here in the city there's not much of Nature, only us folks, a lot of people. I see people everywhere, and in church it's so crowded. I'm not in West Virginia any more—but I still can hear Him, only it'll be the knock of our radiator or the street traffic that sets me to thinking about Him. I've wondered since we came to the city if Jesus hasn't actually come down here to stay with us. I mean, there are so many people in Chicago, I would think He'd be able to hide among us all, and that way get to know a lot about His poor flock down here.

"In the city you see just about everybody in the world, and you're reminded of the Bible. I never did understand a lot of those people in the Bible; they're not like us from the hills. But when we came into the city I began to see that it was a bigger world than I'd ever known, and God has a lot more on His shoulders than us in Down Bottom Creek. That's what the city has taught me. He's not only everywhere, but He's got to be busy; and that means He wants us to be more on our own when we're in a place like Chicago. There are times when I say to myself that right here is the place you really meet God the way you will later, when He's going to decide about you, about where you stand with Him. When I was a little girl I was always hearing my daddy and our minister Mr. McCleary talking about the next world, the next world. Well, you know I say to my husband sometimes that I do believe we may have started on our way to the next world. We've left home. We're in this big city. Everywhere you turn it's new and strange, and so we're being tested, just like it says in the Bible the Lord wants to do with His people, so that He can make up His mind what He thinks about you.

"Since we've been living here I haven't relied upon the Lord the way I had to back there, when we could have just disappeared one of those winters, because of no food and no strength to fight the winter—with pieces

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"It used to be in Waycross, Georgia, I'd sit in church for hours and we could have a good long talk for ourselves, God and me . . . Now I can't always feel Him near me."

of coal my husband and the boys would carry home and wood they'd go cut and bring back. No, here I worry about the Lord, and I'm not so sure of His intentions for us. I ask myself sometimes: What does He have in mind next for us to do? We can't go anyplace further. This is the last stop before we meet Him and He judges us. Back home I'd say to my husband on a real bad day: let's go, let's leave, let's take ourselves out of here and up to Chicago or Detroit or someplace where we won't see our children so hungry and so sick all the time. Well, he'd say to me that maybe we *should* go, but let's stay just a little longer, and if the good Lord says we should pick up and move, then we will. One day we did, of course. And now that we're here, we yearn for the hills, especially in the summer. But the way I see it, God wanted us to be tested. In the city you're tested. Up in the hollow we were tested, too, yes. But there we knew what we could do, and we did it, and it was our soil, and our people have been living on it for so long back you can't count the years.

"In Chicago it's different. In Chicago God isn't right by your side, giving you a lift here and extending His hand to you. In Chicago He's saying to you that there's no place to go now, and you've got to dig your heels in and try and prove yourself; and it's hard, real hard, but if you're to be saved you have to earn it. I tell my children now that when they pray to God here in the city they'd better remember that it's not like in our church back there. He could know each of us back there. I still believe He knows each of us, wherever we are; but I believe in a city He's put us more on our own. I can almost hear Him saying to me: now Clara, you've come a long way, and it's been hard, but now is the time to show what you and your family can do. I asked our minister if he thought that sounded right, and he said it did, because it has to be in a place like this city that the Lord makes His choices. Up in the hollows He is there to help us; here He is there watching us and seeing how *we* do."

AS I HAVE listened to her and her husband and others like them I have found myself again and again taking note of the virtually apocalyptic quality to their descriptions of city-life. It is as if a final confrontation of sorts has come upon them, refugees of sorts, people of faith who at last have met up with what to them seems like a bit of luck, but also a terrible moment of trial, and maybe a prelude to disaster. Needless to say, we all have our hopeful and gloomy sides, and we all can feel thoroughly challenged one minute and at another time either bored or chained to an unyielding destiny handed down long ago. For a family like Clara's, though, a change of scene, a move to the city, has served to sharpen just such alternative moods. And for such people changes in mood bring about changes in faith, changes in religious conviction or sentiment. Once God was immediately present, an ally. He offered a distant promise, even as every single day He could be called upon, talked with, beseeched and implored—and upon occasion gently or slyly or impatiently taken to task. Now God is more removed and harder to reach. Now He has become not only the occasionally stern judge He was always known to be, but a consistently demanding observer who is reluctant indeed to become active in the world's business. Now He is no longer quite so uncompromising and harsh, only further away and more wrapped up in seeing and weighing things.

If God is felt to have left such families more to themselves, they are not quite as alone as they believe to be the case. They know that they have kin nearby in Chicago. They know there are thousands like themselves in other cities. But they certainly do not know about all they share with many others whose religious beliefs are not so very different, whose lives are also rather comparable in a number of ways. I have in mind the blacks who have also come to our cities, the blacks who like Clara and her husband and children have brought God with them—and in so doing come to feel "changed toward Him," even as they themselves have changed, have found a new place to live if not a New Life. In Boston's black ghetto I hear from Mrs. Josephine Williams how and why she has, in her words, "changed toward Him." Mrs. Williams is a Baptist, and in case anyone has forgotten (I believe many of us have) the Baptist Church commands the allegiance of more American blacks than any other organization. Millions and millions of Mrs. Williams' people go to Baptist churches all over the countryside of the South; and in cities those churches appear wherever blacks move in and settle down and try to live and work and prosper and make sense of the world and their position in it.

"We're different now that we're here and not in Georgia," Mrs. Williams says, obviously sure of herself and ready to be put to the test: "I'll tell you why. It's because up here in the city everything goes faster. I feel

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as if my whole life is going by at 60 miles an hour. We came up here five years ago, and in the bus we hit 60, I guess it was one of the turnpikes, and I got real scared. I've never seen so many trees and houses go by so fast. Now that I'm up here I never go any place very far, and in the city a bus can't speed very fast anyway. But everything seems fast. Like I say, my life seems to be rushing away from me and I can't catch hold of it. That's why I feel changed toward Him, our Lord. It used to be in Waycross, Georgia, I'd sit in church for hours and we could have a good long talk for ourselves, God and me, and God and my sister. (We'd always sit together and she'd pray and I'd listen and then I'd pray and she'd listen.) Now my sister is ailing, and it's real bad. But even if she could carry herself to church, it wouldn't be the same. We went together when we first came up here, before she got sick, and we both said the same thing: up North is not down South, and God has to treat His children according to where they live. Working in the fields, we could stop and talk with Him, you know, wherever we were. Now I can't always feel Him near me, even when I'm right up front there in the church."

Why, exactly why, does she feel so differently about God? Is she "estranged?" Has city living got to her mind? Is it the ghetto's fast pace that her self-described "slowness" can't in any form accept? When she talks about God and His church is she in fact talking about man and his society—in which case is it that once she was happy, if desperate, and now she is better fed and clothed but unhappy, and still desperate, though psychologically or spiritually rather than, say, out of hunger? I have no doubt that those questions implicitly contain some answers. Mrs. Williams has indeed gone through a psychological shock of sorts, and as a result the nature of her religious faith has certainly changed. Yet, a good deal more has to be said about what goes on between Mrs. Williams and the God she very much wants near her, the God she misses, "looks out after," and yes, of all things, worries about, for the first time in her life even feels sorry for, and not out of rudeness or blasphemy or clever intellectual contrivance, but because her heart compels the effort of sympathy. And what has to be said has, I believe, been said—by Mrs. Williams. Here she is, talking about the "sorriness" God has to see in Boston, and talking about her sorrow, and talking about God, and again, *His* sorrow: "I never stopped and thought about God and how *He* gets over all of this. I guess I used to take Him for granted. We're His children, you know, and He must follow us right into this street, and busy as He is there must be a few seconds during the year when He shakes His head and asks Himself where they're going and what's happened to them—us, the black folks, here in a building like this one.

"It's good to be here; I'm not saying otherwise. Every time I look at my little girl, my Ruthie, I know that. She gets food she wouldn't get, and the welfare lady sends a taxi over and we go to the hospital in it, because Ruthie can't walk too good, and neither can I. The doctor tells me I have a bad heart, and if someone had given me medicine a long time ago, the valves in my heart (they are like doors, he said) wouldn't be so worn out, the way they are. I told him God chooses the way we'll all go, and I'd sooner die of a tired heart than have a heart of stone. The doctor said he couldn't go along with me, because it's his job to fight every illness he sees, all day long. I told him I was sure God wouldn't hold that against him and he laughed, you know.

"God sees a lot of trouble up in the city. There's sorriness here, too much even for Him to keep His mind on all day long, and into the night. In Georgia you could always take your mind off yourself and everyone else. I would sit myself under a tree and all I'd listen to would be a few flies or mosquitoes talking away, or those birds that are always on the lookout for you and forever reminding themselves to be careful and don't get too close to anyone, be it a man, a woman or even the littlest of babies. I remember once Ruthie was asleep and they forgot themselves, the birds did. They were hopping and skipping and jumping all around her, and suddenly she woke up, the little one did, and she let out a cry—some cloud must have crossed over her forehead—and then the birds just scattered, so fast it was like an umbrella opening up in a real hurry because of rain. I said to myself that Ruthie has got more strength than she knows, because just look what she could do.

"Up here, though, you never can know what your child will be able to do, even when she's bigger, and that's because it's not God's world, it's all built by man, the city is. That's why I know it must be hard for Him to be patient with us. I do believe He must pray for us, just as we do for Him. In Georgia I never thought like that, because all you had to do was step out of your house and there He was, all over. Here you can't see anything but a lot of people, and you hear the noise they make all day long, and they're always ready to cross you up—if it's not the landlord wanting his money, it's the welfare lady telling you to straighten yourself

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up and do as she says or you'll sure enough be in a jam fast, or it's someone on the street who wants to steal from you or get you and your children into trouble. And Lord, there's more kinds of trouble in just this street than I ever saw in all of Georgia, and I've been up and down the state because my aunt moved into Atlanta. I came up here because I had another aunt up here, and I figured if I was going to move to the city, I might as well move out of the South, too. But there's no difference between Boston and Atlanta. They're cities, that's what they both are, big cities.

"I know my bible, yes sir I do. To my way of thinking, God suffered so we wouldn't be the only ones who suffered. Because He suffered, we can fall back on His example, and we can say to our kids that it's bad, it sure is, but Jesus Christ Almighty our Lord, He walked all over, and they didn't accept Him, a lot of people, and finally they sure did do Him in bad. And maybe we had to leave Waycross, Georgia, and move here. Maybe it's up here that God gives us a chance, and says we've got to try and save ourselves, like He did, and if we but try, He'll remember us when we finally come to meet Him.

"A little while ago our minister talked to us about Judgment Day. Now, I've been hearing about Judgment Day since I was a child back South and old enough to sit there in church, 'The Church of God the King' my aunt always used to call it—by the whole name. But the new minister was saying that Judgment Day might be everyday, and I thought he was wrong there, as wrong as he could be. Then I got home and I got to thinking. I said to myself that maybe he was right, after all. Every time I open the door and walk down the hall and go out into the street I expect I may have all I can do to stay alive and not lose something to a robber: it could be my life or it could be the few dollars I have on me. That's why you have to pray that you won't lose faith in God. It's harder to keep your faith when you're not sure what to expect from day to day.

"My oldest boy, he's 15, and he sure knows how to say things that are true. He says you can do a lot more for yourself in the city than back home in Georgia, but only if you move fast and it's all up to you. That's what I think the minister meant. God has said goodbye to us, for most of the time, while we're up here, and He may be watching over us, but He wants us to move along on our own steam, and that's what we have to do, I know. He did the same Himself, didn't He? He walked the Holy Land. He tried to do His best, but it wasn't enough. Even God the Father couldn't save Him, except after Jesus had gone and died. When I'm really down I know it's no use whatever we do, we'll lose, at least here on this earth. When I feel up, I say we have to work hard, and the world may be a lot better one of these days, a lot better. But we'll never know, will we? I'm not sure God Himself knows what we'll come to, hereabouts and that's the biggest worry I have. But I'm afraid to tell my minister what I think. I did once and he got himself all excited and he was cross as could be with me. All I said was that God couldn't be as sure of Himself when He looks down upon Boston as He is when it's time for Him to worry about Waycross, Georgia. That's all I said. And I think I was on to something, even if that minister says no."

SHE BELIEVES she was on to a lot. She believes that for her religion became much more complicated, difficult and impersonal after she moved from a rural life to an increasingly sophisticated urban one. She believes that her children are "learning so much new up here that they are forgetting the most important thing to remember, God's wishes." She believes that "the city is a place of temptation." Before there was only extreme hardship and the daily surrender to God's inscrutable will. Now there is "promises, a lot of them, and people whispering into my children's ears."

Many things are whispered into her children's ears, not all of them bad or wicked or sinful or insulting or demeaning. Yet, even opportunities bring their dangers —and for people brought up to expect nothing (or risk death for expecting much of anything) it is by no means easy to sit back and welcome God's grace as at last within grasp. God was tricked, remember. God was arrested, arraigned, condemned and killed, remember—just as He was (*because* He was) beginning to make a dent on people, to make His way, to obtain a responsive following, the attentive ears of believing men. Put differently, life always was and always will be treacherous, unpredictable, uncertain. God must not be doubted, but men and their promises, cities and their blandishments, they are quite another story. Maybe someday it will be different. Maybe someday our cities will bring for Mrs. Williams and others like her glimmers of the New Jerusalem. But right now it is memories of the old Jerusalem that haunt such people, the Jerusalem of rural cabins and cottonfields and watchful, heavily armed sheriffs, the Jerusalem one entered with hope and just about nothing else, the Jerusalem one soon learned to know

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"We come to the city so we can have enough food every day. I never expected to find God and His kingdom here . . ."

and often enough feel miserable about—hence the dreams of another chance, a New Life, this time in a City of God's.

By no means is Mrs. Williams without any hope; nor are the Allens, once of West Virginia and now of Illinois, totally in despair. They have put behind them their past and not a small part of their heritage precisely because they do indeed have hope, a kind of hope, it seems, America's cities alone have right now for such people. All the while, though, they worry—and not only about the obvious, concrete, explicit problems that go with everyday life. They worry, too, about just those matters any "urban planner" thinks about, not to mention whatever metaphysicians our cities still manage to have around. Will the city, some form of it, bring the best life ever to more and more people? Is there ahead of us some "golden age" that bricks and mortar and wise social policies and plenty of money and well-designed programs will all manage to usher in? Will old, dying cities become bright and swinging, full of all that man has dreamed is possible, full of so much that so many have never dreamed to be possible? Will we somehow save ourselves from fear and hate and revolution by arranging things, enacting new laws, raising up buildings, tearing down others, and in schools and places of business and on streets and avenues achieving what words like "desegregation" or "integration" or "social justice" or "radical political change" are meant to convey?

Far be it for Clara Allen or Josephine Williams to take up such broad and speculative issues quite that way. They are no social theorists, no "experts," no students of America's "urban dilemma." But they are not completely immune to big and significant questions, and at times they can be as grandiose or messianic or prophetic or pervasively alarmed as any of us. We have our visions. They have theirs. We dream, or dare not dream, so awful do things seem, and they have their moments of confidence and times of unqualified doubt. And if we want more Reason, a Better World, a New Society, New Towns, Cities of the Future, they continually wonder just what it will be like in the New Jerusalem ahead of them. They wonder, as a matter of fact, how one is ever to distinguish between the New Jerusalem and the Jerusalems that have always been with us, waiting to receive all sorts of visitors, strangers, exiles, wanderers, refugees? That is to say, how does a believer know God's will, and indeed how can we be sure, now or in some other life, of the real thing? For Mrs. Allen the answer goes something like this:

"God is awaiting us, and when we get to Him we'll know, and until we do, we'll worry. We come to the city so we can have enough food every day. I never expected to find God and His kingdom here, though to hear some people on the radio and television talk about Chicago, you'd think God built this city for His favorite children. We left the happiness we had back home so we can stay alive here. Sometimes I really believe God sent us here so we'll be away from Him for a while, and more grateful when He calls us back."

Nor is her radical sense of disenchantment, mixed as it is with real awareness of the improved standard of living now hers and her family's, unfamiliar to Mrs. Williams: "Before we were in the wilderness and it was touch and go if we'd make it. When we decided to come up here, I had a dream that we'd find the Holy City; but it's not a holy city, this one, that's for sure, though we eat better here. I have nightmares, and in them it's always the same: we're falling way down, down, down, the whole family, and we're bad off and there's no welfare check. Then I wake up and I know what a fool I was to think we'd ever reach that Holy City until we're dead and gone from this city here. But meanwhile my kids have their food in them. That's something."

AND SO IT goes in our cities. Perhaps Mrs. Williams is unwittingly blasphemous when she compares her travail with that of Jesus. His stay in the wilderness, His hunger, His time in the Holy City, the temptations He knew there at the hands of the Devil, are not exactly those Mrs. Williams or Mrs. Allen have known. Not divine, indeed only too human and terribly needy, those women would doubtless tell any stones that came their way to become bread. Yet, like Christ, they continue to believe that there is more to life, much more, than the comfort that material possessions provide. Some would say they *have* to believe so out of desperation. Others would want to raise them high, make of them superior spiritual people, who see further than the rest of us do, who have a wisdom we lack. But they themselves make no such claims for themselves, nor do they ask for the clever and condescending "explanations" of their beliefs, their religious faith, that various observers are tempted to offer.

Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Williams speak for no one but themselves, and have nothing to recommend to others. From childhood on they have heard Christ's story, lis-

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"To hear some people talk about Chicago, you'd think God built this city for His favorite children."

tened to His experiences, memorized His words—even as they would be declared "illiterate" by us, the knowing and articulate ones. From childhood on they have understood how scarce bread can be, how famished Christ must have felt those forty days. In Mrs. Williams' words, "We live on God; we wait on Him. After I've prayed to Him, I'll just think of Him, and sometimes I'll say to myself the words He said—that my mamma told to me back in Georgia." When the New English Bible came out I told Mrs. Willams that I had been reading it, and she asked me how it differed from the Bible she has never read, but heard and heard quoted, and can recite by heart and with passionate conviction, for all her "ignorance" and "poor education." In the course of things I found myself calling upon Matthew's account of how Jesus was tested—because she herself knew the story so well. I told her that the New English Bible had Jesus speak this way: "Man cannot live on bread alone; he lives on every word that God utters."

She waited maybe four or five seconds, long enough for the words to be taken in and tested, long enough for me to get a little curious, then a little worried. But there was no reason for apprehension. She is an old veteran of biblical translations, even of exegesis. When she at last responded she spoke to the spirit, not the letter: "Yes, that's right—*every single word.* And we need them real bad, God's words; we need them more than anything else in the whole world."

And one more time I could only think to myself that so it goes in our cities, so it goes with the needy—for many of whom He very much lives: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who walked and wandered and knew the countryside and eventually knew the city and was badgered and importuned and made light of and mocked; Who was judged suspect, dangerous, an outrageous dissenter, a threat to an empire's sense of law and order; Who was put to death; Who yet lives on in the mind and heart and soul of a Mrs. Williams or a Mrs. Allen; and Who thereby does indeed walk the streets of our American ghettos.

UNHAPPY BIRTHDAY

Celebrations and symptoms at the United Nations

BETTY PILKINGTON

To borrow from diplomacy's own dictionary, the errors in the planning and execution of the General Assembly's commemorative session honoring the UN's 25th year look very much like matters of "procedure," but the quiet catalyst precipitating them was more than one issue of real "substance."

Months ago, delegates working on the silver jubilee plans discovered that in spite of a certain very hardy U.S.-Soviet *détente* that operates smoothly when it serves the political ends of each of the two powers—as in the voteless Assembly of 1964 or on the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968—there are East-West ideological and political differences that make the production of a single commemorative chronicle, on film or in print, plainly impossible.

Washington's version of the Korean war or the Cuban missile crisis is as different from Moscow's as black from white, and since neither power would settle, at such junctures, for merely recording those differences, both the film and the book were abandoned.

The same working-group believed too that it would be heresy to pass the 25th milestone without some form of rededication to the principles of the UN Charter. Furthermore, they argued, a mere renewal of commitment without a reflection of what has been accomplished or a projection of what was still to be done would be meaningless.

But what was not openly acknowledged, yet surely foreseeable, was that those same old East-West differences plus another major source of division—neo-colonialism or imperialism—remained unresolved and would rule out the kind of specifics that could give a declaration real meaning.

So, after some three weeks of debate—at times, angry—in the present 25th Assembly, the lion brought forth a mouse. Or rather, maybe two mice: a declaration on friendly relations among states and another on the 25th anniversary itself, both hardly more than windy rewrites of the Charter's own assertions. A third declaration,

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a strategy for the Second UN Development Decade, deserves a better grade because it does set precise goals for developing countries and puts a bit of pressure on the rich nations to contribute at least I percent of their GNP.

Those three were sufficiently non-controversial for adoption by acclamation at the ceremonial session on October 24.

A fourth or anti-colonial declaration had won heavy support against Western big-power opposition in an earlier "ordinary" Assembly meeting and therefore "required no action" at the full-dress session.

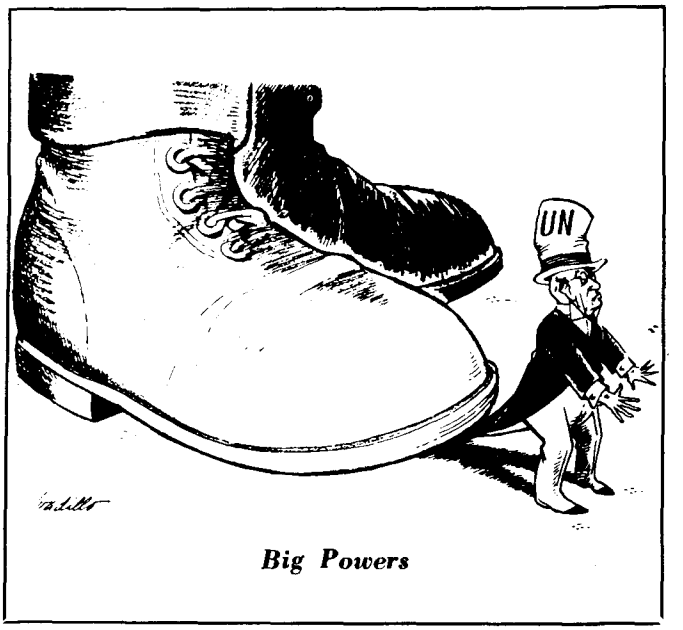
These kid-glove procedures in the handling of the declarations were, of course, part of the will to present at the commemorative session a public image that was free of disunity. And unhappily there is a strong suspicion that it was this same motive that led the planning committee to authorize the customary general debate (or succession of policy statements) at the foreign ministry level beginning in mid-September and another when the Heads of State (and Government) arrived for the commemorative session, October 14-24.

The merits of even one general debate have for a long time been regarded as dubious and to double this formula was to invite boredom with open arms. The result: first, a two-week period filled by speakers who knew they were going to be eclipsed later on; then a two-week break while delegates battled the details of the upcoming special session; and finally, an anti-climactic ten days taken over largely by Heads of State (or Government) but badly jolted by the appearance of only two of the Big Four leaders, President Nixon and Prime Minister Heath.

For Mr. Kosygin's absence the UN, of course, cannot be blamed. His presence, along with that of Mr. Nixon and the possibility of a brief "summit," might have lifted the jubilee session out of its doldrums and would undoubtedly have drawn to New York other national leaders who stayed home.

For want of any sound explanation from the Soviet delegation—who have privately insisted that "there was no real reason for Mr. Kosygin to come"—one can only assume that the Russians sensed the stir of Cold War, Right-shifting breezes during these pre-election weeks, and that Mr. Kosygin, adding this fact to the stalemate in Middle East negotiations, may have felt that the peace-maker image that Tashkent and Glassboro had given him could be easily erased by a few unplanned but maybe necessarily bitter exchanges with the American President.

Mr. Nixon, for all the "chauvinism"—as one key African labeled it—in his Assembly statement, as well as his thinly veiled proposal that the UN worry the lesser issues and leave the big ones to the United States and the USSR, can be credited with generating



Big Powers

the first (and only) major piece of excitement in the 10-day session.

This can be laid, primarily, to an over-all realization, here, of the enormous influence on the economic and political health of the UN wielded by the White House. It was fueled, too, by a kind of wistful curiosity about the manner and tone of a President who had preempted the UN's long-scheduled concert hour for his own Heads of State dinner and, a few days later, had canceled an appointment with a delegation from the Organization of African Unity headed by President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia in order to take to the hustings for a handful of shaky Republican candidates.

Among those invited to the White House who had forwarded their regrets, only Moktar Ould Daddah, President of Mauritania, had not yet left for home at the contested dinner-concert hour. His presence in the Assembly Hall that evening must have cheered U Thant and maybe to some degree softened a rather unpleasant incident.

U Thant's larger worry, however, had come not at the end of the session but at the beginning, when China, the United States and the USSR conducted atomic tests on the same day. This was, he said, a vivid illustration of "the sad state of affairs" that still prevails 25 years after World War II.

And for the 25th anniversary "celebration" it was a bad omen. What followed was clear evidence that the member states of the UN with very few exceptions are not yet ready to break away from tired old patterns. But unless the Third World and the smaller of the industrialized states can before long muster enough adventurism and enough corporate courage to challenge the high-handedness of the superpowers, the question will no longer be "Who spoiled the birthday party?" but "Who's dismantling the UN?"

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THE SCREEN

Talk about ignorant. Ignorant is the word for these Hollywood motorcycle flicks. Take *The Wild One,* which was made in '53. That was Hollywood's debut on the open road, and in it Brando rides a Triumph. Putting an alleged member of an outlaw M.C. (Motorcycle Club) on a Triumph is typical of Hollywood. That bike is so light it's like riding a flying piece of shrapnel, and no real cycle bum would be caught dead on such English junk. No, your true cycle bum is a Harley Charley. What he wants is a 1500 c.c. Harley-Davidson Electra, and once he's got one there are two ways he can go with it: up towards the customize-by-addition jobby that's in *Scorpio Rising* and used to be seen on the East Coast in general, or down toward the customize-by-subtraction number that's in the better A.I.P. flicks and is seen nowadays on the West Coast. The resulting machine is known as a hog or chopped hog, depending on what's been done. Weirdness is prized more lately than it used to be, so tear-drop gas tanks, cantilevered front wheels, ape-hangers and the like are acceptable.

Now that we've got the matter of the bikes straightened out, there's still the matter of the bike bums to settle. Trouble with Brando in *The Wild One* is, by the time you're through checking out his double-breasted leather jacket, hard-billed Army hat like some general might wear, etc., you can't tell the guy from a State Trooper. He's such a clothes horse, it's amazing he didn't have on jodhpurs and a little leather bow tie. Fly-vines like that just aren't true to life. The jacket is the basic garment worn on the bike. And the jacket, *sans sleeves,* is Levi. The rest of the wardrobe is optional, though it's wise to wear regulation boots when going out on the weekend to stomp and be stomped. The only cat in *The Wild One* who knew the score on a weekend ensemble was Lee Marvin. (It's disgusting how they played him for laughs. He should've been the star.) In *Hell's Angels '69* the threads worn by Sonny Barger are also a class outfit.

Probably the best biking flick ever was *Scorpio Rising,* which Kenneth Anger made in 1966. Maybe Anger had his cats dressed a little prissy, but he understood the breed anyway. The cycle bum as depicted by Anger is your marginal element. He's a one-percenter (1%er), as the Angels so imaginatively put it on their jacket *insignium.* And he knows it and he couldn't give less of a ———. In fact, he's proud of it. It's the thing that keeps him from being like all the other dumb slobs, so he tries to live up to his place outside the socio-economic structure. In the words of an oft-quoted tattoo, he's "Born to Lose." But he's no revolutionary and he's no Commie crud. If he's fond of certain Nazi *objets d'art,* it's on account of agreeing with the Kraut's methods, not what they stood for. Basically he's got no politics. Violence is his gig. You might say he's the perfect patriot. He also considers his sex life to be his own business because he's a consenting adult.

Anger put a motto on his flick: "What fools these mortals be," by which mortals he must have meant those thunderers in Hollywood. Look at these so-called block-busters—*Easy Rider, C.C. and Company, Big Fauss and Little Halsy,* or *Little Fauss and Big Halsy,* or whatever it's called. Man, those guys in those flicks are creeps. Any resemblance to real cycle bums living or dead is purely coincidental, as they say.

The main thing wrong with these flicks is that the guys who made them are all Easy Riders themselves. I mean, who is Easy Rider anyway? He's a regular little Horatio Alger, that's who. He makes a big killing in the heroin brokerage market, fills his gas tank full of money, and—vroom!— retires to tour the country. C.C. Ryder must be Easy's cousin too, even though he spells his name funny. From the title of *C.C. and Company* you'd guess it's about some corporate greaser. And in a way it is, because this C.C. splits from his M.C., the Heads, to race on the team of a Jap cycle factory with an unpronounceable name. *Little Fauss and Big Halsey* is just more of the same. All these flicks are bull put out by and for stiffs who want to see the whole world remade in their own image. But if you want to know what an Easy Rider really is, he's a pimp who takes a free ride on his girls at the end of the evening—just like all these Hollywood phonies who've been getting a free ride from the cycle bums.

C.C. and Company is the worst of the lot. For one thing, it's impossible to take Joe Namath seriously as a cycle bum, let alone a movie star. Joe plays C.C., who gives up the Heads for legit racing because he's in love with a straight chick. (Ann-Margaret is the chick, and you can't get much straighter than to have two names like Ann and Margaret.) But casting Namath as a goody two-shoes like this doesn't fool anybody. Half the guys who've already been to see this flick went just for the nude scene, and not because they're a bunch of perverts either. They were hoping for a close-up of Joe's knees, to see what shape they're in, and find out whether the smart money was going to stay on him this fall. As it turns out, of course, everybody was looking in the wrong place: they should've been checking his wrists.

If you've seen *The Wild One,* you've seen most of what's in *C.C. and Company.* You'd think after 17 years Hollywood could come up with a new bit. But no, *C.C. and Company* gives you your standard nice girl-bad boy routine, your standard fight scene, your standard heroine-saved-from-gang-bang scene, and so

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forth. There's even a scene in this flick where the Heads bust up a Sunday afternoon scrambling race. When the Heads arrive, some dude sneers about how "Guys like that give biking a bad name," which is a line right out of the same situation in *The Wild One.*

The one character in any of these flicks who could've made it as a bike bum is Big Halsy. This is fairly ironical, since *Little Fauss and Big Halsy* isn't a flick about the M.C.'s at all. It's about the scramblers and flat-racers—the kind of clowns who sneer at Brando and at the Heads. Of the two racing partners, Halsy definitely has the better moves, such as kicking Fauss off his bike in the hopes Fauss would break a leg. A guy who can do that to his buddy can get by in any M.C. Like Lee Marvin in *The Wild One,* Robert Redford, who plays Halsy, should be the hero in this flick.

But Little Fauss is the kind of guy who would inevitably appeal to the Hollywood mentality. He's a nothing, a real yo-yo with no character of his own. He's the perfect picture of a legit cycle racer, and goofy Michael J. Pollard is perfectly cast in the role. Halsy has to teach Fauss everything he knows. For instance, Halsy has to teach him how to run out on a woman. But when Fauss finally does it on his own, he doesn't even steal anything from the chick. There's no hope for a cat like that. At the end he beats Halsy in the big race. Big deal. Fauss belongs on those laydown bikes that look like the old Messerschmitts. He deserves to spend his life racing around in circles for money. That's all that ever happens in cycle flicks anyway.

COLIN WESTERBECK, JR.

BOOKS

Religion as 'symbol system' and factor of the culture

Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World

ROBERT N. BELLAH

Harper & Row, $7.95

EUGENE FONTINELL

However differently we might evaluate the particulars of the various upheavals within the universities, there should be agreement on at least one point—they signal the end of an illusion that has increasingly dominated Western civilization for the last several hundred years. I refer to what John Dewey critically designated a "partitioning of territories" whereby we attempt to place our science and knowledge in one realm and our values and commitments in another. The surrender of this illusion, however, can lead to disaster and despair unless it is accompanied by the companion insight that the actual work of effecting a synthesis of knowledge and commitment which will enable us to achieve the most radical kinds of development and fulfillment will not emerge simply by wishing for it. Further, we must avoid neurotically lamenting the sad situation in which man now finds himself and recognize that there will be no short-cut to the kind of society which is more and more desired and desperately needed if man is to survive. The task confronting us is clearly not a task simply of politics, or religion, or science or philosophy—it is a multi-dimensional task demanding a maximum effort on the part of a multiplicity of individuals and groups and involving a range and variety of experiences.

This excellent collection of essays by the distinguished sociologist of religion, Robert N. Bellah, embodies this twofold awareness of radical collapse and need for imaginative reconstruction.

Convinced that "the work of every man, even a nuclear physicist, is rooted in his personal myth," Bellah introduces these essays, written independently over the last decade, with an exceptionally frank and integrating autobiographical statement—his "private myth." From his early Protestant background, Bellah tells us, he travelled through a period of Marxism, harassment during the McCarthy era, disillusionment with but not over-reaction to Marxism and a rediscovery of his Protestant heritage through Paul Tillich. Thus he came to see that "the totalism of Communism and the totalism of the 'Free World" are equally destructive." At the same time, through a reconsideration of the Christian doctrine of sin he was led to conclude "that the worst is only a hair's breadth away from the best in any man and society," and "that identification with the body of Christ meant identification with all men without exception."

The essays themselves are grouped in three sections. Two essays in Part I present the theoretical foundations of Bellah's approach. Since they are relatively brief and written independently, they give us little more than a hint of the direction in which Bellah thinks a theory of religion should move. Nevertheless, this direction is clearly communicated. He rejects both "rationalistic" and "nonrationalistic" approaches and suggests that a more adequate theory can be constructed from the categories of Durkheim, Weber and Freud. More proximately, it is the "cybernetic model," developed only recently, which suggests to Bellah the possibility for combining a scientific method with acknowledgement of those

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non-rational factors which are partially constructive of the human condition. The cybernetic model, which is a development of Talcott Parsons' "action theory," accounts for human energy in terms of both "genetic information from the organism" and "symbolic information from the culture." Within this model, religion is viewed "as the most general mechanism for integrating meaning and motivation."

Bellah's concern throughout these essays is with religion as a "symbol system"—"as a set of symbolic forms and acts that relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence." The second and longest section, "Religion in the Modernization Process," is composed of seven essays dealing with "the role of religion in the great transition from traditional peasant society to modern industrial society." Bellah is here citing concrete evidence which supports his hypothesis that religion is a unique and indispensable factor in any culture. With one exception the essays in this section are sociological considerations of religion within Eastern cultures. The one exception is Bellah's controversial "Civil Religion in America" in which he argues "that the civil religion at its best is a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen in or, one could almost say, as revealed through the experience of the American people." Though written in 1966, the author still adheres to the basic position of this essay since, as he states in an opening note, he is "convinced that every nation and every people come to some form of religious self-understanding."

Bellah now views his essay on "Civil Religion in America" as transitional in that it is the beginning of a shift from "pessimistic optimism" to "optimistic pessimism." The failure of the United States to fufill the promise which he believed to have been present in the early 1960's leads him to conclude that "the problems of American Society, not of the developing societies, are the really most serious ones today." One gets the impression, however, that if America's problems are most serious it is mainly because it is in an advanced stage of modernization. Since modernization is becoming global, it is evident that the crisis of modern man and modern religion is not restricted to Western culture. It is to this crisis that Bellah most specifically addresses himself in Part II, "Religion in Modern Society."

The "optimism" which now characterizes Bellah stems from a faith in "new possibilities" which he finds present in the "emergence of a counter-culture in America, a culture of imagination and not of calculation." What is particularly significant in Bellah's positive attitude toward this counter-culture is that it is singularly free from any sentimentalism or uncritical praise of youth. He acknowledges the fact that the young "have brought forth new styles of freedom, new modes of access to the unconscious, but these styles and modes have been remarkably fragile and have easily disintegrated into cultural nihilism or political fanaticism."

Bellah stresses that he is once and for all finished with any form of absolutism or totalism but his concern for "wholeness," which is really a religious concern, has increased. He now believes, however, that it is poets such as Yeats and Wallace Stevens and ecstatic aphorists such as Norman O. Brown who offer the richest resources for overcoming the fragmentation which is in danger of destroying men, both individually and collectively. In calling attention to the role and indispensability of the "ecstatic imagination," Bellah is not arguing for an escape from science into an uncritical irrationalism. On the contrary, the task, as Bellah sees it, is to achieve a new integration between religion and science. The first step toward this integration, however, is to recognize that science as well as religion ultimately rests on symbols which are "unprovable assumptions." Further, we must surrender the false notion that science deals with "reality" and that poetry, art and religion are restricted to "mere symbols." Only then can we begin to move beyond "the literal univocal interpretation of reality that our pseudoscientific secular culture espouses." Contrary to the current "myth of secularization," therefore, religion is once "again moving into the center of our cultural preoccupations." This is inevitable if we are to survive, because religion is the symbol system which "provides the context in which life and action finally have meaning."

It in no way diminishes the importance or achievement of this work to say that it tells us more of "what" must be done to alleviate our situation than of "how" we are to do it. Bellah is fully cognizant of the tentativeness and incompleteness of the project proposed by these essays. Further, he is acutely aware of the risk, professional as well as personal, which accompanies such an undertaking. Nevertheless, these essays clearly indicate that in any effort to construct a new world, Robert N. Bellah has the courage, faith and intellectual equipment to make a significant contribution.

Monk Dawson

PIERS PAUL READ

Lippincott, $5.95

The Manuscripts Of Pauline Archange

MARIE-CLAIRE BLAIS

Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, $5.95

DANIEL M. MURTAUGH

Despite some similarities of theme, it would be hard to imagine two novels more different in their methods or their effect. Both have to do with flights from a desolate Catholicism to the life outside which it condemns as mortal sin. *Monk Dawson* is written in cool, ironic prose and gives a general sense of finely calculated ends and means, of firm, classic control. *The Manuscripts of Pauline Archange* is romantic, rhapsodic, extreme. Its control is no less real, but suggests a wild dance on the brink of a chasm.

Eddie Dawson, the hero of Piers Paul Read's novel, carries his sense of vocation through life like an albatross. His ambition to help people in general

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(not "one at a time" the way a doctor or a social worker might) estranges him from individuals. His need for "some single principle which would give shape to his life" has a corollary a tendency to asceticism (he could have stepped out of Nietzche's *The Geneology of Morals*). To the Benedictine monks at his boarding school this means he is called to join them. He agrees and so prolongs his stay in the scenes of his childhood.

His ministrations there to the sons of the rich soon seem irrelevant. After a mild breakdown under the rising stress of his calling he turns to the secular priesthood in London. But life responds ambiguously to his efforts to redeem it. The issues he raises in the pulpit and in a newspaper column seem more social than religious. The interest he raises in a bored teenager whose Catholicism has flagged is finally more sexual than religious. On retreat in a Trappist monastery, he draws a blank in his efforts at prayer, and leaves the priesthood and the faith behind him.

After a lonely period of adjustment, he falls into an affair with a rich young widow, success as a free-lance journalist, and the more refined dissipation of Swinging London. These last eventually include a Black Mass which he almost offers on the naked body of his mistress. He vomits instead and begins a slow and disastrous process of return.

His reviving sense of an unfulfilled vocation loses him his mistress and his job. He drifts vaguely into marriage with the girl he had once counseled as a priest, and, as his struggles with himself lead to a solipsistic asceticism, he drives her to suicide. When last seen by his school friend who narrates the story, he is peacefully following the life of a Trappist monk, separated from the world and so at peace with it. And his peace seems genuine enough to trouble the narrator in his settled ex-Catholicism.

The balance of irony and sympathy which Read achieves in this narrator's voice is nearly perfect. His sense of evocative detail—the contents of an ex-priest's suitcase, the menu at a lunch counter and at a charity ball, the quality of stone at a Cumberland monastery—is unerring.

I was troubled by the end of the story, though I suppose I was meant to be in one way or another. As the narrator drives home from the monastery and tells Dawson's ex-mistress of their friend's new-found peace, he can see in his rear-view mirror his own wife's knee being fondled by one of his fast-set friends. The alternatives of this last scene, which seem to be those of the novel, are too starkly drawn. Life, it seems, can have no real measure of truth in the world, only in flight from it. Sincerity, let alone love, between human beings seems an impossibility, with or without God. It is not simply that this is too discouraging: it is too clear, too innocent in its very disillusion. One has the feeling that the deck has been stacked, and perhaps by a Jansenist like Monk Dawson himself. Or even one like Graham Greene, who (quite justly) declares this "a remarkable novel" on its dust jacket.

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Marie-Claire Blais is a young French Canadian with some half dozen novels and a book of poems behind her. Her previous novel, *A Season in the Life of Emanuel,* has at its center an autobiographical sketch by a consumptive child whose writing is a cry of defiance against the misery of his life and the approach of his death. The manuscripts of a suffering child, a structural detail of that novel, are the sum and substance of its successor. *The Manuscripts of Pauline Archange* take us through memories of almost unmitigated horror rendered bearable, redeemed even, for us as for the novel's heroine, by the fluid, re-creative medium of her prose.

Take, as an example of that prose, the novel's opening sentence: "Like the chorus of my distant memories, ancient ironies clothed by time with a smile of pity (though a pity that faintly stinks of death), the old nuns, who once cradled my life in their cruel kindness, still keep their eyes on me through the shadowy grilles of a cloister buried in the colorless countryside, under a sullen sky, at the fringe of a storm, but perpetually receiving, like a sickly incense, the lamentation of their prayers, of their hymns to the Blessed Sacrament." A whole experienced world is created here. Images shade into values. Memory coalesces to remembered faces. Eyes look across space as across time and evoke or express (we can't say which) a smile of pity. We rediscover in a sentence like this how entangled are the contents of memory with the act of remembering itself. (Derek Colman's generally excellent translation does not always register the complications of this act in the original French: Pauline often sees herself as a child in the third person where Colman translates her into the first.)

What Pauline remembers does not fall into a conventional plot or lend itself easily to summary. Her life is lived out in the mental and physical squalor of a French Canadian slum, under the tyranny of repressed, frustrated adults who visit their failures in blows upon their consumptive, lamed offspring. To survive is to escape, to rebel, above all, to avoid pity. Pity "stinks of death," and only leads to torture and rape of the victims it cannot help. Pauline writes her manuscripts because, as her family tells her, she "has no heart." Only at such a cost does she live and speak to us.

The novel has its faults. Some of the people we meet in Part 2 (published separately in French as *Vivre! Vivre!*) seem arbitrarily bizarre. And yet the novel's total effect, its strange world of suffering children preternaturally old, is so convincing that I am not sure that I would not reverse these judgments on another reading.

In Defense of Anarchism

ROBERT PAUL WOLFF

Harper & Row (paper) $1

TODD GITLIN

Robert Paul Wolff was one of the two or three best teachers I had in college. He taught a course in 1961 part of which was a philosophical examination of the problem of loyalty, and I remember him coming in one day to announce he was perplexed. He had been asked to join the board of Boston SANE, which required that he sign some sort of loyalty oath. His course of action was thrown open to the class. I don't remember what we or he decided, but I remember being impressed that an instructor would bring the agonies of his own choices into the classroom—by God, this was *real* philosophy! Later in the semester, Wolff began a series of lectures on Marxism by discussing Marx's precursors, only to interrupt himself after one or two of these lectures with the statement that he had decided it would be more appropriate to examine Marx's *concepts;* whereupon he changed horses in midstream. Again, I was impressed that he would openly confess error. Here was someone who took ideas seriously enough to let them set his course.

I realize this ad hominem preface

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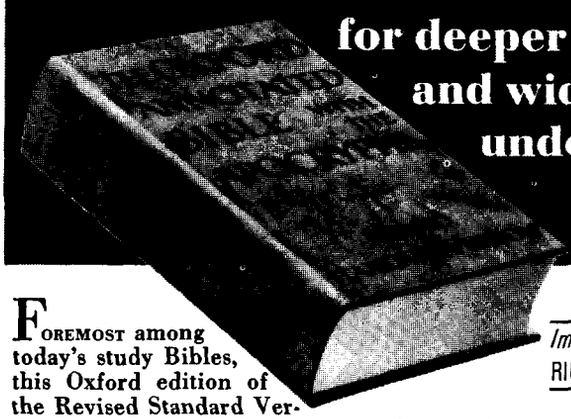

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may discredit what I have to say about Wolff's new *book*, but I run the risk because Wolff's integrity as a teacher and a responsible (to use that much misunderstood word) thinker underscores the significance of his writing. For Wolff is still at it, looking for a horse to ride. Five years ago, he says in introducing his essay on anarchism, he set out to solve the "fundamental problem of political philosophy"—squaring the state's claim to authority with the individual's autonomy. Again he had to confess to a class that he could not reconcile the two; but he kept trying. Finally he had to concede that the circle could not be squared; he had become an anarchist perforce. This slim book is a reconstruction of the reasoning that led him outside the mainstream of political theory, and again it is singularly persuasive in part because it reconstructs a reasoning process that in fact went on in the man's mind. So much of political discourse. even in high Theory, takes the form of stating and elaborating a *position* rather than replicating a *process* of thinking; it is refreshing to see reason building again, even if it is only building castles in the air.

Wolff's method is the refutation of the negative: is there a compelling argument for the best state imaginable, the democratic state? As a philosopher he will be satisfied not by the usual rationales for democracy (that it "works," that it is egalitarian, that it is the worst except for all the other systems, etc.), but only by a proof that democracy reconciles authority and autonomy. And it is precisely this proof that classical democratic theory, in Locke or Rousseau, has failed to give. Only unanimous direct democracy preserves for the citizen his unalienated autonomy; yet a rule of unanimity is plainly "impractical" in the absence of overriding unity binding the citizens. For all but the most fervently utopian or enlightened cooperative societies, unanimous direct democracy is the limiting-case exception that proves Wolff's rule. Nor, in refuting the legitimacy of majoritarian direct democracy, is he satisfied with a claim that it hasn't even been tried; for, he demonstrates, subsidized television with an instant vote-feedback mechanism would make direct democracy practical. The trouble is not practicality, it is logic.

There is no need to spell out Wolff's argument on this score; any abbreviation of his extraordinary brevity (the paperback edition weighs under four ounces!) would do violence to his method. It is enough to state his conclusion: that classical democracy, even if realized, would alienate the freedom of a minority. Here is one explanation, perhaps, for the nationalism and separatism which characterize the world's revolutionary movement (along, dialectically, with solidarity): the more homogeneous the culture, the less alienated is a political minority within it. In any case, on the doorstep of unremitting anarchism, Wolff confesses himself uncomfortable with the conclusion to which time and logic have guided him. In a curiously moving and difficult passage he grasps for conditions under which individualism might not set limits to the authority of a legitimate state. Finally he is left with nothing but an educated hunch: "When rational men, in full knowledge of the proximate and distant consequences of their actions, determine to set private interest aside and pursue the general good, it *must* be possible for them to create a form of association which accomplishes that end without depriving some of them of their moral autonomy. The state, in contrast to nature, cannot be ineradicably other." In the meantime, the only moral choice is utopia, and Wolff concludes with a few pages of useful prolegomena to any future utopian proposals. (Indeed he promises a full-blown

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REVIEWERS

EUGENE FONTINELL is the author of *Toward a Reconstruction of Religion* (Doubleday).

DANIEL M. MURTAUGH is a teacher in the English Department at Boston University.

TODD GITLIN, a Harvard graduate active in the radical movement, is co-author, with Nanci Hollander, of *Uptown: Poor Whites in Chicago* (Harper & Row).

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treatment of the conditions of utopia in a later work.)

It is a pity that this prolegomena remains so sketchy, and that the later work will only come later (though I suspect it will be worth waiting for), for the Left in this country is confronted with an urgent need to be clear and expansive about our visions of a livable anarchist society. If it is true, as some of us have been saying (hoping?), that present and incipient technology, liberated from their coercive uses, could dig the foundations of a decentralized order, it is our responsibility to say how, in rich and imaginative detail. If a revolution is conceivable which would liberate Americans as well as the Third World, it is our responsibility to conceive of it—and conceive it. If it is true, as Martin Buber believed, that only an anarchist society *in being* could supplant the state to which it is opposed, are there signs that that society might be coaxed into being? Or that it is already silently grouping itself for the long haul ahead? How could our personalities be transformed so that direct democracy would be practical *in decentralized* units without alienating our freedom? (This is the question that seems to haunt Wolff.) Does Marcuse's vision of a substantially less repressed human community, liberated by automation from the need for toil and its disastrous consequences, stand up? If the clamorous drama of opposition and the confused condition of radical analytic theory and practice are our sole preoccupations, we shall not nourish those practical visionary ideas that may help our countrymen, and ourselves, gain strength and direction for the decades ahead. Wolff's essay is helpful in clearing away some of the rubbish, but now we shall have to look beyond the rubbish and restore the belief that history is not ended, that there is, after all, something new possible under the sun.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 163)

I nowhere insist on any position, especially utopianism. Apparently Baum is unable to distinguish between the dogmatic, special-pleading type of book, and a historical book, which is primarily descriptive. The body of the book is descriptive. It describes, under a threefold typology, a variety of visions of social change, which are not readily reconcilable with each other. The final chapter gives a critique of these visions and gives virtually the same critique which Baum himself gives of utopianism and apocalypticism. By acting as though I am 'insisting' on utopianism, by sandwiching in my critique early in the review, and then giving the same critique as Baum's critique of 'my position,' he gives a very misleading account of the tone of the book.

2.) There are not two different accounts of the relationship of Niebuhr to Camus. The phrase about the fusion of the 'finite and the infinite' is Niebuhr's, not mine, as Baum suggests. But Niebuhr puts this 'fusion' together in such a way that man is never allowed to stay 'up in the air' with the infinite, but the infinite acts rather to break his heaven-storming and return him to the finite, and so the direction is similar to that of Camus, even though the two proceed on quite different presuppositions.

3.) I think Baum exaggerates the difference between conversion and apocalypticism, especially when he interprets conversion socially and historically, and not just individualistically. I would define apocalypticism as conversion, socially and historically conceived. Apocalypticism, like individual conversion, is generally apprehended as being a 'once for all' event, but nevertheless it is a continually repeatable 'once for all' which each generation appropriates anew. This is precisely why apocalyptic movements don't disappear when their hopes are disappointed, but can arise again and again. They also are subject to fundamental delusions, as is quite clear in the book in my descriptions of various apocalyptic movements. In trying to distinguish between apocalyptic movements and the original Christian revelation, which Baum prefers to believe was something quite different which he calls 'conversion,' it seems he is making history over in the image that suits his own theology. Too much historical research has been done on the apocalyptic character of the earliest Christianity to sweep under the rug. What does one do with the Markian apocalypse, the apocalypse of John, St. Paul's obvious belief that the world will end shortly, etc., etc.? What Baum does is ignore them, because they don't fit into his preference. It would be more honest to say, 'Yes, Jesus and Paul were apocalypticists, but we are not sure we like Jesus and Paul all that much,' than to make over this period of Jewish-Christian history in a more palatable modern image. The difference between Baum and myself perhaps comes down to this: The dogmatician presumes that he must always make Jesus and 'Catholic dogma' come out agreeing with himself. The historian makes no such presuppositions. ROSEMARY RUETHER

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Chastising Chastity

Fort Monroe, Va.

To the Editors: I was surprised to read in *Commonweal* an editorial as superficial as "The Old Hang-up" [Sept. 25]. The writer apparently does not believe there is a relationship between chastity and love. If he has not read it, I recommend that he study Joyce's *New Dynamics in Sexual Love,* published by the Liturgical Press. With better philosophical grounding, your editorial writer may be able to spare *Commonweal* the disgrace of running editorials like this one.

By the way, some of the things you publish are absolutely outstanding.

STANLEY F. ROCHE

North East, Pa.

To the Editors: I read your editorial "The Old Hang-Up" in the Sept. 25 issue with something of the same indignation with which you seem to have written it, only in reverse. You disagree with Pope Paul's assessment of the church's "intense vitality," on the ground that the Vatican is hung up on sex, the latest example of this being the recent announcement of a rite of virginity for women in secular society. This, you say, would be laughable if it did not point up "anew the frightening dislocation of moral priorities at the Vatican" and you add, "with prescriptions like the chastity rite that are literally out of the Middle Ages, the Vatican burdens itself with well-intentioned but self-defeating negativism."

First of all, the rite is not quite literally out of the Middle Ages (from which apparently nothing good can come, ever!) but, at least so far as its idea and purpose are concerned, it is right out of ages of persecution and martyrdom under the debauched and tottering Roman Empire, which is one good reason for its renascence today when the combined forces of sexual permissiveness and anti-life are fast leading our society to similar ruin. Anyway, I fail to see anything negative in it, except perhaps in the sense in which martyrdom for Christ, which so often accompanied this special consecration and was equated with it, can be termed negative. Admittedly, now as then, there will be comparatively few who will take up this challenge. But they will suffice to show the "intense vitality" of the church.

I have before me four ample volumes containing practically all of the the Pope's public addresses during the past several years. They simply do not bear out your contention that he is hung up on sex. Rather, he seems to be hung up on implementing Vatican II and, besides, on many (the valid ones!) of the social issues you yourself are hung up on, though he sees clearly—as you, at least in this editorial, apparently do not—that the mission of the church goes beyond these. J. GREDLER, CSSR

St. Mary's Seminary

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